

COLORADO BIRD NOTES

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REVISIONS OF COMMON NAMES OF BIRDS

Questions are asked frequently at our meetings or trips, such as "Why do you say 'Blue Grouse' instead of 'Dusky Grouse'?", "What is the difference between Woodhouse's and Scrub Jays?", "Why are Pink-sided Juncos counted as Oregons?" In general these questions relative to the common names of birds are the result of one or more of three recent trends in bird nomenclature: (1) use of subspecific names only when there is no doubt as to the subspecific status of an individual bird; (2) recombination into one species, generally as subspecies, of two or more forms previously considered distinct species, or the opposite: reclassification of former races as distinct species; and (3) choice of an entirely or partly new name suitable for all the recognized races (subspecies) of a species or readily distinguished from similar names of other species. The names of nearly 80 of our Colorado birds are affected by these changes.

I

As is well known, the scientific name of any animal consists of two or three terms (called binomial or trinomial). The first two denote the genus and the species of the animal. If there is sufficient variation, generally in coloration or size, between the individuals in different parts of the range of a species, that species is further subdivided into races or subspecies and the third part of the name is added to that of each race. However this system has not been followed consistently in applying common or vernacular names to the birds, to the great confusion of very many amateur birders. In the case of the Song Sparrow, trinomial common names have been used, all subspecies being known by such names as Mountain Song Sparrow, Dakota Song Sparrow, Desert Song Sparrow, and Eastern Song Sparrow. (In all, at least 27 races of the Song Sparrow have been described.) Vesper Sparrow, Fox Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak, Hermit Thrush, Blue Jay, Cliff Swallow, Horned Lark, Screech Owl, Horned Owl, Mourning Dove, White-tailed Ptarmigan, Sparrow Hawk and Pigeon Hawk are among the relatively few other species so treated. Of a few other species, some races have been known trinomially and others binomially. The Winter Wren is called trinomially, Eastern Winter Wren and Western Winter Wren and, binomially, Kiska Wren, Alaska Wren, etc. (9 subspecies in all) but the novice has no way of knowing from the common names that seven of the nine are the Winter Wren under other names, but must study carefully the scientific names, as probably few do. Some of the 13 or more races of the Hairy Woodpecker have been known as the Rocky Mountain Hairy, Northern Hairy, Eastern Hairy, White-breasted, Newfoundland and Harris's Woodpeckers. One of the Wood Warblers has been known as Wilson's, Northern Pileolated and Southern Pileolated Warblers. Savannah Sparrow, Brown Towhee, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Downy Woodpecker, Gilded Flicker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Canada Goose are likewise designated, some races trinomially and others binomially.

The races of the great majority of our birds, however, have all been known subspecifically by binomial common names. Thus *Vireo solitarius* is known in different regions as the Blue-headed, Mountain, Plumbeous, Cassin's and San Lucas Vireos. One of the thrushes is known in the East as the Veery (formerly Wilson's Thrush) and in the West as the Willow Thrush. Twenty-one Chickadees, all known by such binomial names as Black-capped, Mountain, Long-tailed, Short-tailed, Alaska and Barlow's Chickadees, actually represent seven different species. Thirty binomially-named Wrens represent only six species so different that they in turn belong in four different genera.

The Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of the American Ornithologists' Union, in the preparation of a revision of the "Checklist of North American Birds" is attempting to eliminate much of the confusion relative to subspecific common names by assigning each species a binomial different from that of any other species and each subspecies a distinctive third term. Thus, for instance, the Winter Wrens will be known, probably, as Eastern, Western, Kiska, Alaska, (etc.) Winter Wrens; Hairy Woodpecker races will be called Rocky Mountain, Northern, Eastern, White-breasted, Harris's, (etc.) Hairy Woodpeckers; the above-mentioned Warbler, Wilsonia pusilla, will be, probably, Wilson's, Northern and Southern Pileolated Warbler (at present the specific name "Black-capped" is being used by "Audubon Field Notes", instead of "Pileolated".) Vireo solitarius will become Blue-headed Solitary Vireo, Mountain, Solitary Vireo, Plumbeous Solitary Vireo, etc. Hylocichla fuscescens becomes Eastern Veery and (again probably) Willow Veery.

In most cases, as the Black-capped Chickadee, the name (in this case "Black-capped") given the type specimen (the first individual of the species collected and described) will be used as the species (specific) name, with a subspecific third term such as "Common" or "Eastern" added. Thus the type race will have a trinomial name parallel those of the other races, thus: Eastern Black-capped Chickadee, Long-tailed Black-capped Chickadee, Oregon Black-capped Chickadee, etc. The Mountain Chickadee will be known (presumably) as Common Mountain Chickadee (our race), Short-tailed Mountain Chickadee, etc. The confusing Sapsuckers (Sphyrapicus varius) will be known as Yellow-bellied Common Sapsucker, Red-naped Common Sapsucker, Northern Red-breasted Common Sapsucker and Southern Red-breasted Common Sapsucker (Not Eastern Yellow-bellied. At present Audubon Field Notes uses "Yellow-bellied Sapsucker" for all races.)

II

Many proposed name changes due to combination of forms formerly considered distinct are merely the adoption in the case of circumpolar species of the common name already in prior use by the British ornithologists. Thus, Halboell's Grebe becomes Halboell's Red-necked Grebe, the Duck Hawk becomes Peregrine Falcon, the Northern and American Ravens (subspecies) become Northern and American Common Ravens, American Pipit becomes American Water Pipit.

In other cases, forms formerly considered distinct American species have been combined only recently with Old World species as races of those species. The Semipalmated Plover (a species) becomes Semipalmated Ringed Plover, a race of the Ringed Plover; Hudsonian Curlew becomes Hudsonian Whimbrel, a race of the Whimbrel; American Magpie becomes American Black-billed Magpie; the Northern and the Northwestern Shrikes (subspecies) become races of the Gray (or Great Gray, by latest authority) Shrike. On the other hand, several circumpolar species probably will not have their specific common names changed to the Old World name, for example: the Loons (Divers); American Merganser (Goosander) (is, however, being changed to American Common Merganser); Marsh Hawk (Hen-harrier); Barn Swallow (European Swallow); Brown Creeper (Tree Creeper); Winter Wren (the same species as Europe's only Wren).

In a few cases, two or more of our American species formerly considered distinct are being combined as races of a single new species. Thus the eastern Florida Jay is now combined with the seven subspecies of the California Jay, including our Woodhouse's Jay, and is given the new and descriptive name of Scrub Jay (Florida Scrub Jay, California Scrub Jay, Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, etc.). Similarly, the five races of the Canada Jay, including our own Rocky Mountain Jay, are combined with the two races of the Oregon Jay (the Oregon and Gray Jays) and given the most descriptive of the former names, Gray Jay. The Pink-sided Junco is being combined with the seven races of the Oregon Junco, from which it was taken only a few years ago. Although Audubon Field Notes is now using "Oregon Junco" for the

inclusive species, the A. O. U. will very probably settle on "Pink-sided Junco" for the new combined species. (Incidentally, not too long ago the Oregon Juncos, including the Pink-sided, were considered members of the same species as the eastern Slate-colored Junco.) The California Clapper Rail (4 races) and the five eastern races of the Clapper Rail have been combined into one species (Clapper Rail) and consideration is being given to combining the Clapper Rail and the King Rails as one species.

New species recently recognized are: Harlan's Hawk, formerly considered a dark race of the Red-tailed Hawk; Northwestern Crow; a former race of the American Crow; and Black-eared Bushtit, formerly Lloyd's Bushtit and a race of the Bushtit (now Common Bushtit).

III

Completely new specific common names (in some cases old names revived) have been applied to a considerable number of species to aid in their recognition or to show their relationship to other closely related species. Some of these are: American Widgeon (formerly Baldpate); Blue Grouse(formerly Dusky, Richardson's and Fleming's); Mountain Owl(formerly Spotted Screech Owl), to distinguish from the Screech Owl and from the Flammulated Screech Owl (new name: Flammulated Owl); Yellow-shafted Flicker (the eastern species, Parallels the western Red-shafted species); Western Kingbird (formerly Arkansas, to show relationship with Eastern Kingbird); Sedge Wren(Short-billed Marsh Wren), to distinguish binomially from the new "Marsh Wren" (formerly Long-billed Marsh Wren); Swainson's Thrush(formerly Olive-backed, Russet-backed; not used by A. F. N.); Solitary Vireo(mentioned above); Small-billed Waterthrush(formerly Northern and Grinnell's; not used by A. F. N.); Common Meadowlark (Eastern Common, Southern Common and Rio Grande Common), to parallel the single-race Western Meadowlark; Crow-blackbird (an old name revived for the Purple-Bronzed-Florida Grackle to show equality with the Boat-tailed Grackle; not used by A. F. N.); Lesser Goldfinch (formerly Arkansas and Green-backed races); and Eastern Towhee and Spotted Towhee, two species each with several formerly binomially designated races.

Several common names of two closely related species have been revised to show equality of species by adding to one or dropping part of one, or by both. Thus: Rough-legged Hawk (formerly American Roughleg) and Ferruginous Hawk (formerly Ferruginous Roughleg); Flammulated Owl (mentioned above); Ferruginous Owl (Ferruginous Pygmy Owl), to distinguish from Pygmy Owl; Arctic Woodpecker (Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker) and Three-toed Woodpecker (an Old World species which includes our Alpine); Marsh Wren (formerly Long-billed Marsh Wren, mentioned above); Cassin's Finch (formerly Cassin's Purple Finch, to parallel the Purple Finch of East and California); and American Tree Sparrow (actually a binomial name to distinguish our native Tree Sparrow from the naturalized European Tree Sparrow of another Family). The term "American" has been added to many names to distinguish from similar or similarly named Old World species; for example: American Avocet, Am. Crow (A.F.N. To be changed again, to Common Crow, by A.O.U.), Am. Dipper, Am. Goldfinch and the above-mentioned Am. Tree Sparrow.

The term "Western" as applied to many of our Colorado birds is often confusing. It is the specific name of the Western Grebe, W. Sandpiper, W. Gull, W. Flycatcher, W. Wood Pewee, W. Meadowlark, and W. Tanager and the subspecific name of at least 26 Colorado birds, including Western Goshawk, W. Red-tailed Hawk, W. Willet, W. Burrowing Owl, W. Blue Jay (there is no "Eastern" Blue Jay), W. House, Winter and Marsh Wrens, W. Robin, W. Yellowthroat, and W. Vesper Sparrow. Other terms as "Eastern" and "Northern" are similarly confused.

Roger Tory Peterson, in his revised "A Field Guide to the Birds" (Eastern) suggests still more changes in the names of the hawks, in the hope that new names might reduce some of the prejudice attached to the name "Hawk". The Cooper's, Sharp-shinned and Goshawk would remain "Hawks", but the others might be called by the old English names for their European counterparts: Peregrine Falcon (Duck Hawk; this change has been made), Merlin (Pigeon Hawk, which actually is the same species as the Old World Merlin), American Kestrel (Am. Sparrow Hawk), Marsh Harrier (Marsh Hawk; the Old World name, Hen-harrier, undoubtedly would do little to remove prejudice). He concedes that Buzzard, the Old World name for the Buteos (Red-tailed, etc.) could hardly be taken from its long-established American use for the Vultures.

To sum up, all of the above is a lengthy and probably still confusing way of saying that the new Check List of the A. O. U. will give each bird a common name intended to indicate clearly the species of which any subspecies is a member and to show the relationship of each species to any other related species.

The information used in this article was obtained mostly from the following: Audubon Field Notes, February and August, 1950; R. T. Peterson's "A Field Guide to the Birds" (Eastern), 1947; R. H. Pough's Audubon Bird Guide - Eastern Land Birds, 1946 and "Audubon Water Bird Guide", 1951; and J. J. Murray's "A Check-list of the Birds of Virginia", 1952.

Following is a list of Colorado birds whose common names in common use, as in Niedrach and Rockwell's "The Birds of Denver and Mountain Parks", are being revised. The first column contains the old names of the 1931 edition of the A. O. U. Check List. The second column contains the new names (binomial if the species has only one race, trinomial if more than one, with the subspecific term in parenthesis. A question mark with the subspecific term indicates the writer's best guess.) In reports to the Audubon Field Notes, the subspecific term is not used, except in a few cases where identification of the race is positive (Not based merely on locality or range). As the revised Check List will not be completed within the next two or three years, additional changes in these and other names can be expected. However, most of them are believed to be final and it is suggested that all birders gradually acquaint themselves with them.

(* indicates that Audubon Field Notes is not using this new name, but is using name in first column unless otherwise indicated.)

Common Loon	(Greater?) Common Loon
Lesser Loon	(Lesser?) Common Loon
Holboell's Grebe	(Holboell's) Red-necked Grebe
Treganza's Heron	(Treganza's) Great Blue Heron
American Egret	(American) Common Egret*
Brewster's Egret	(Brewster's) Snowy Egret
White-faced Glossy Ibis	White-faced Ibis
Baldpate	American Widgeon
Greater Scaup Duck	Greater Scaup
Lesser Scaup Duck	Lesser Scaup
American Merganser	(Am.) Common Merganser*
American Rough-legged Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk
Ferruginous Rough-leg	Ferruginous Hawk
Duck Hawk	(Subsp?) Peregrine Falcon
Dusky Grouse	(Dusky) Blue Grouse
Little Brown Crane	(Little Brown) Sandhill Crane
Sandhill Crane	(Greater?) Sandhill Crane
Semipalmated Plover	(Semipalmated) Ringed Plover

Wilson's Snipe	(Wilson's) Common Snipe*
Hudsonian Curlew	Hudsonian Whimbrel*
Upland Plover	Upland Sandpiper
Avocet	American Avocet
Flammulated Screech Owl	Flammulated Owl
Northern Flicker	(Northern) Yellow-shafted Flicker
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	(Yellow-bellied) Common Sapsucker*
Red-naped Sapsucker	(Red-naped) Common Sapsucker*
(Both Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - A. F. N.)	
Natalie's Sapsucker	(Natalie's) Williamson's Sapsucker
Batchelder's Woodpecker	(Batchelder's) Downy Woodpecker
Arkansas Kingbird	Western Kingbird
Little Flycatcher	(Little) Traill's Flycatcher
Rocky Mountain Jay	(Rocky Mountain) Gray Jay
Northern Blue Jay	(Western) Blue Jay
Long-crested Jay	(Long-crested) Steller's Jay
Woodhouse's Jay	(Woodhouse's) Scrub Jay
American Raven	(American?) Common Raven
Western Crow	(Western) American Crow
Long-tailed Chickadee	(Long-tailed) Black-capped Chickadee
Lead-colored Bushtit	(Lead-colored) Common Bushtit
Rocky Mountain Nuthatch	(Rocky Mountain) White-breasted Nuthatch
Black-eared Nuthatch	(Black-eared) Pygmy Nuthatch
Rocky Mountain Creeper	(Rocky Mountain) Brown Creeper
Dipper	(Subsp.?) American Dipper
Western Marsh Wren	(Western) Long-billed Marsh Wren
(to be (Western) M.W. when Shortbilled M.W. is changed to Sedge Wren)	
Sennett's Thrasher	(Sennett's) Long-billed Thrasher
Eastern Robin	(Eastern) American Robin
Western Robin	(Western) American Robin
Russet-backed Thrush	(Russet-backed) Swainson's Thrush*
Olive-backed Thrush	(Olive-backed) Swainson's Thrush*
(at present, both are Olive-backed T. - A. F. N.)	
Willow Thrush	(Willow) Veery
Eastern Bluebird	(Eastern) Common Bluebird*
Chestnut-backed Bluebird	(Chestnut-backed) Western Bluebird
Western Gnatcatcher	(Western) Blue-gray Gnatcatcher
American Pipit	(American) Water Pipit
Northwestern Shrike	(Northwestern) Great Gray Shrike*
	(Northwestern) Gray Shrike - A.F.N.
White-rumped Shrike	(White-rumped) Loggerhead Shrike
Starling	Common Starling
Plumbeous Vireo	(Plumbeous) Solitary Vireo
Cassin's Vireo	(Cassin's) Solitary Vireo
Lutescent Warbler	(Lutescent) Orange-crowned Warbler
Calaveras Warbler	(Calaveras) Nashville Warbler
Grinnell's Water Thrush	(Grinnell's) Small-billed Water Thrush*
	(Grinnell's) Northern Water Thrush - A.F.N.
Western Yellowthroat	(Western) Common Yellowthroat
Long-tailed Chat	(Long-tailed) Yellow-breasted Chat
Northern Pileolated Warbler	(Probably no change by A.O.U., but now (Northern) Black-capped W. - A.F.N.)
English Sparrow	House Sparrow
Thick-billed Redwing	(Thick-billed) Red-winged Blackbird
Bronzed Grackle	(Bronzed) Crow-blackbird*
	(Bronzed) Purple Grackle - A. F. N.
Eastern Cowbird	(Eastern) Common Cowbird*
	(Eastern) Brown-headed C. - A.F.N.

Rocky Mountain Grosbeak
Cassin's Purple Finch
Hepburn's Rosy Finch
Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
Eastern Goldfinch
Pale Goldfinch
Arkansas Goldfinch
Bent's Crossbill
Bendire's Crossbill
Mexican Crossbill
Arctic Towhee
Spurred Towhee
Canyon Towhee
Desert Sparrow
Oregon Junco
Shufeldt's Junco
Montana Junco
Pink-sided Junco
Western Tree Sparrow
White-crowned Sparrow
Gambel's Sparrow
Lapland Longspur
Alaska Longspur

(Rocky Mtn.) Black-headed Grosbeak
Cassin's Finch
(Hepburn's) Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
(Common?) Gray-crowned Rosy Finch
(Eastern) American Goldfinch
(Pale) American Goldfinch
(Arkansas?) Lesser Goldfinch
(Bent's) Red Crossbill
(Bendire's) Red Crossbill
(Mexican) Red Crossbill
(Arctic) Spotted Towhee
(Spurred) Spotted Towhee
(Canyon) Brown Towhee
(Desert) Black-throated Sparrow
(Common?) Oregon Junco
(Shufeldt's) Oregon Junco
(Montana) Oregon Junco
(Pink-sided) Oregon Junco
(Western) American Tree Sparrow
(Eastern) White-crowned Sparrow
(Gambel's) White-crowned Sparrow
(Common) Lapland Longspur
(Alaska) Lapland Longspur

Donald M. Thatcher

In the following articles by Miss Pritchett and Mrs. Hunt, we have used their vernacular names, although they expressed willingness to have them changed. We feel that, until the revised Check List appears, it should be the prerogative of a contributor to decide whether or not he wants his bird nomenclature modernized. Your opinions on this matter are desired.

The Editors.

For lack of time and space, we are postponing the summary of birds of the season planned for this month. Interesting notes have been received from Boulder, Fort Morgan and Weldona, as well as Denver and vicinity and we will try to summarize these next month. YOUR notes are desired, too.

The Editors.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Mr. & Mrs. John R. Douglass (formerly Miss Margaret Mattoon), 21 Mines Park, Golden
Tel. Golden 851 R
Miss Judith Zucker, 1564 Milwaukee Street - - - - - FL 8962

PERSONALS

The Corresponding Secretary has received a note from Mrs. Mary Reifschneider acknowledging a sympathy card sent her on behalf of the Bird Club. Her husband, Mr. Jacob Reifschneider, passed away shortly after they moved from Wheatridge to California, last spring. Mrs. Reifschneider's address is P.O. Box 773, Yucaipa, California.

PLEASE!

Please let's have more material for the Bulletin! Such material should be in the hands of the editors by the tenth of the month for publication in that month's Bulletin.

The Editors.

Birds at Tiny Town
by Mrs. Lillian Hunt

(The following notes are some of Mrs. Hunt's observations of birds at her mountain home on Turkey Creek, about 2½ miles above Tiny Town, Colorado, at about 7000 feet altitude, with cover of Blue Spruce, Ponderosa Pine, Trembling Aspen and Willows.)

The Mountain Bluebirds arrive in March, but do not start nesting until several weeks later. They have used the same bird house the past 13 years. It is a double apartment house; the end facing the east is taken over by the Bluebirds, the other end, facing west, is occupied by Violet-Green Swallows. The young Bluebirds leave the nest about July 7 and a few days later all start on vertical migration. Some years two broods are raised.

There are usually 4 or 5 pairs of Violet Green Swallows nesting in bird houses. When nest-building some will fly past, taking a feather out of my hand held out to them. A pair of Rocky Mountain Nuthatches raises a family every summer, using always the same bird house. The Black-eared Nuthatch usually uses the same bird house year after year. The Western House Wren will take different bird houses. Last year a pair raised four young in an electric switch box with an opening so small one wondered how they could get in with the twigs for the nest.

A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches (which are quite tame) comes to the feeders in the winter, but leaves in the spring. They like suet, peanut butter and bread crumbs, as do the Chickadees, other Nuthatches and Juncos. Batchelder's Woodpecker (with a nest in a dead Aspen), Audubon's Warbler (which nests in a big spruce tree) and Western Tanagers (nesting in a tall pine) all come to the suet feeder. The Western Tanager is quite fond of hard-boiled eggs.

I put out string on trees and bushes for nesting material. The Pine Siskins, which nest every year in tall spruces, take colored string, but most birds want just the white string. The Ruby-crowned Kinglet also nests in tall spruces. Its song heard in early morning and throughout the day is most pleasing. The Chipping Sparrow nests in a low spruce tree, sometimes occupying the same nest more than once. The Plumbeous Vireo has a nest in a pine tree, the Western Warbling Vireo in an Aspen and the Catbird in willows near the stream.

A few years ago, a pair of Townsends' Solitaires built a nest and raised a family under the eaves of one of the cabins. They didn't return the next year, but a pair of Western Flycatchers took over the nest, adding to it, and raised two young and returned the following year, adding to the nest again. Then, last summer, a pair of Townsends' Solitaires, (perhaps the same ones that had been there before) built a nest over the cabin door. The female built most of this nest; however, the male carried twigs into every space under the eaves and between the rafters on that side of the cabin, (perhaps to keep other birds from building there). Three young were raised, people going in and out of the door and an electric light above the door seeming not to bother them. The Flycatcher incubated only 10 feet away.

The dead branches are not cut off the trees at my place, even though they are unsightly, and I have dead trees propped up in view of my kitchen windows on which the Flycatchers and Solitaires perch much of the time.

The Gray-headed Junco nests under a low juniper bush, raises two broods and brings its young to the porch to feed them crumbs that have been scattered there. The Green-tailed Towhee scratches on the ground for food like a chicken, nests in a bush, sometimes sings from the top of a bush.

I haven't found the nest of the Ovenbird, as I am not able to hike very much, (Most all of the birds mentioned in the accompanying list are seen or heard near the house.) but I've heard its song, "Teacher, Teacher, Teacher," and others have heard it there, too. Several years ago, in the fall, I found a small bird and, not being quite sure of its identity, I took it to the Museum for identification. It was an immature Ovenbird.

I have not located the nest of the Olive-sided Flycatcher (probably not on my property), but, several times throughout the day it sits on tall spruce trees and gives its 3-note call. Last summer was the first time I'd seen the Rufous Hummingbird around there, but the Broad-tailed has been coming to flower beds for many years. Also, last year was the first time I'd seen the Western Evening Grosbeak in the summer time. I saw a pair several times, but do not think they nested nearby.

In the spring migration, the White-crowned Sparrow and Willow Thrush are seen; in the fall, Macgillivray's Warbler, and just once, a Clark's Crow - also in the fall, Franklin's Gulls are seen flying high in the sky. The Western Crows fly over the place nearly every day in the summer.

List of Birds Seen or Heard at My Home on Turkey Creek, above Tiny Town.

Cooper's Hawk	Clark's Nutcracker	Audubon's Warbler
Red-tailed Hawk	Long-tailed Chickadee	Ovenbird
Franklin's Gull	Mountain Chickadee	Macgillivray's Warbler
Mourning Dove	Rocky Mountain Nuthatch	Western Tanager
Howell's Nighthawk	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Western Evening Grosbeak
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	Black-eared Nuthatch	Cassin's Purple Finch
Rufous Hummingbird	Western House Wren	Pine Siskin
Red-shafted Flicker	Catbird	Green-tailed Towhee
Batchelder's Woodpecker	Western Robin	Spurred Towhee
Western Flycatcher	Willow Thrush	Shufeldt's Junco
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Mountain Bluebird	Pink-sided Junco
Violet-green Swallow	Townsend's Solitaire	Gray-headed Junco
Long-crested Jay	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Chipping Sparrow
Magpie	Plumbeous Vireo	White-crowned Sparrow
Crow	Western Warbling Vireo	

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Interesting Intimacies with Birds

by Margaret E. Pritchett

Once in July on Rabbit Ear's Pass in Colorado it was a thrill to find a Night-hawk's two babies by the side of an old fallen log. They were in the pin-feather stage and were sitting together in a slight depression on the ground which was their nest. We watched the shadows of the adult birds flitting over the open space among the trees where we were. They were keeping watch of their young as we held them in our hands a moment to observe them more carefully. Then we left these odd babies where we found them in one of the pretty park-like spots among the Engelmann Spruce trees. We hoped no predator would locate these young birds by following our scent to their whereabouts.

In another part of the broad Rabbit Ears Pass region we were walking quietly through another wooded area to a tiny stream when to our wonder we saw a Golden-crowned Kinglet bathing at the water's edge. Evidently he was undisturbed by our presence, as he spattered his feathers in the water to his heart's content, then flew to a high perch on an Engelmann Spruce near by.

We were able really to touch a Broad-tailed Hummingbird on its nest not far from there. The nest was at the tip of a low evergreen branch close to the little stream. When the incubating hummingbird finally left the nest after our repeated molestations, she "zoomed" about us, and at last stopped to rest on another branch as we watched her. Her eggs resembled two navy beans. We could easily see them in the nest. Of course we went away shortly for we sensed the mother bird's anxiety to be back on her tiny, gray, knob-of-a-nest on the low slanting branch so accessible to our view.

Late in summer Marsh Hawks were sometimes seen on Rabbit Ears Pass flying low in parky places in quest of food similar to that found at an earlier time of year on the plains. This was one of their vertical migration spots.

Often people see large hawks being tantalized by Red-winged Blackbirds or Robins as they are soaring over the country, but in this region we saw a Sparrow Hawk bother a big hawk until the latter let the gopher drop from his talons, when the little hawk seized it and got away with it.

There are nearly always Mountain Bluebirds and Gray-headed Juncos about. However, the most memorable sound when one is fishing up there on Rabbit Ears Pass is the plaintive song of the White-crowned Sparrows in the dwarfed willows along the small water-ways and the common note of Lincoln Sparrows with them.

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Winter Bird Population Studies

For the fourth season, it is planned to make winter bird population studies in Genesee Mountain Park, in the same areas used for the breeding bird population studies described in the October COLORADO BIRD NOTES. The results of these studies, like those of the breeding studies and the Christmas Count, are published in "Audubon Field Notes". While most of the work during the past three years has been done by the writer, it is his intention to make club projects of these studies and this is an invitation to other members to participate.

Requirements for these studies are, in brief: (1) that the habitat be uniform throughout the area and surrounded by essentially similar habitat. (2) that at least 6 trips be made, which must cover the entire area. (3) that trips be made only between December 20 and February 10 (to eliminate possible counting of migrants) and (4) that trips be made only in good weather. As winter birds, unlike breeding birds, are not territorial, but may move freely into, out of or across a study area, the counting must be kept on a statistical basis. In other words, instead of trying to find as many species and individual birds as possible during a trip, the counter should try to determine, as best he can, the number and species of birds present, theoretically, at any one time. The few that cannot be identified by sight or sound should be recorded as unidentified finches, hawks, jays, etc., or simply as "unidentified".

Proper coverage of the study areas requires about two miles of walking for the two adjacent "Core" plots, in Lodgepole Pine and Douglas Fir, and three miles for the 67 acres of Ponderosa Pine. Two or three participants spaced about 200 feet apart can, of course, reduce their walking to about one-half or one-third these distances, and all areas need not be covered during the same day.

Anyone interested in working on these studies should call the writer (Glen-dale 7479) and make arrangements to obtain maps and to be shown the areas and the procedure for counting.

Donald M. Thatcher

December 6, Jim Jetensky and I, birding in a gale wind at Genesee Mountain, were able to find only one or two each of Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch and White-winged Juncos in nearly an hour. We were compensated, however, by coming upon a beautiful Bobcat which, thanks to the noise of the wind, we watched for a considerable time at a distance of 30 feet as it went about its hunting in the snow. Even though up-wind, we were able to talk and walk(or slide) down hill toward it before it discovered our presence.

Donald Thatcher

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

At WATERTON, November 7, with James Humphrey leading, and a warm, clear day, seven members found 37 species of birds. Most abundant species was the American Crow(100), with the American Tree Sparrow(40) second. One Pigeon Hawk and one Red-tailed Hawk were seen. Most unusual observation was a White-throated Sparrow.

The trip November 14 to the HUGHES RANCH, near DANIELS PARK, on another warm, clear day, led by Ruth Wheeler, was attended by 18 people. Twenty-one species of birds were seen, of which the most unusual was the Pine Grosbeak(2). The Pygmy Nuthatch(26) was most abundant, with the Mountain Chickadee and Pine Siskin(each 16) next. Of 53 Juncos, only 18(of three species) were identifiable. An immature Golden Eagle and a Sharp-shinned Hawk were the only Raptors seen. An interesting sight was all three Nuthatches in one tree at the same time.

The Christmas Count scouting trip of November 21, led by John Chapin in the plains and creek-bottoms of area 3(See Map, page 2 of November Notes). Of the 41 species seen, the Red-winged Blackbird was most numerous. Two Swamp Sparrows, apparently a new species in the Denver area were seen at close range by several of the party, in cattails with Song and American Tree Sparrows and 3 Marsh Wrens. Six hawks were seen, one each of Red-tailed, Rough-legged, Marsh, Pigeon, and Sparrow Hawks and Prairie Falcon. Other unusual species were Wilson's Snipe, Long-eared Owl, Water Pipit, Rusty Blackbird and Harris's Sparrow.

An unscheduled trip in Area 4, led by John Flavin, November 26, to Marston Lake and Ken Caryl Ranch, found 40 species. Four Whistling Swans at Marston Lake and a Mountain Bluebird at the ranch were the most unusual finds. Hawks were the Goshawk, Cooper's, Red-tailed, and Sparrow and Golden Eagle.

The scouting trip in Area 2, (plains and Red Rocks Park) November 28, led by Don Thatcher, found 18 species, the Oregon Junco most numerous(75), and nothing unusual was seen.

December 5, the scouting trip in Area 1, at Clear Creek east of Golden, was led by Robert Glover. Thirty-two species were found, including a Goshawk, 18 Wilson's Snipe(an unusual concentration), two Belted Kingfishers, a male Eastern Downy Woodpecker, 3 Winter Wrens, 2 Marsh Wrens, 1 Gray Shrike, 5 Rusty Blackbirds and a Harris's Sparrow.

Altogether, the above four scouting trips turned up 64 species.

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Have you paid your dues? This Bulletin is expensive.

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CORRECTIONS: Page 5, lines 47 to 49 should read as follows:

Grinnell's water-thrush	(Grinnell's) Small-billed Waterthrush
	(Grinnell's) Northern Waterthrush - A.F.N.
Western Yellow-throat	(western) Common Yellowthroat
(Note dropping of hyphens from revised names.)	

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

All members and their friends are reminded again that their participation in the Christmas Counts is desired by the Field Trips and Projects Committee, and that proficiency in birding is not a requirement. Both Counts need more parties and parties can be arranged to suit the abilities, physical and otherwise, of all comers.

Through an oversight, the last paragraph on page 3 of the November NOTES did not specify that yards or feeding stations reported must be within the 15-mile circles. Anyone in doubt as to his location relative to the circles and all within the circles who wish to report should call or write John Chapin or one of the other area leaders. Home counts should be reported the night of the Count, if convenient, or not later than the next day.

Members and friends are reminded also of the get-together at the home of the Chapins, the afternoon of the Denver Count, Saturday, December 26, to be joined after dark by the counters. Those who wish to do so can ease their consciences by bringing a pot-luck donation for supper. (Better call Mrs. Chapin first - PL5-0862.) The Chapin home is a one-story, wooden, ranch-type house on the west side of the Parker Road (Route 83), 12 miles from Colorado Blvd., $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the Cherry Creek dam and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Bellevue Road (junction Routes 83 and 88).

IMPORTANT---Because of this meeting and the holidays, the regular meeting at the Museum (Tuesday, December 22) will not be held.

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER - JANUARY

December

- 22 (Tues.) NO REGULAR MEETING (See above)
- 26 (Sat.) Dawn to dusk. Christmas Count. Denver area.
P.M. Got-together at Chapin home. (See above)

January

- 2 (Sat.) All day. Christmas Count. Idaho Springs area.
 - * 3 (Sun.) 2:30 & 4:30 PM Lecture, "Portugal and Madeira", by Alfred Wolff
 - * 4 (Mon.) 6:30 & 8:30 PM Denver Museum of Natural History, Phipps Auditorium
 - 10 (Sun.) 7 AM Field trip - Barr Lake - John Chapin, ldr. - PL5-0862
Montview & Colorado Blvd. Bring lunch. Transportation, 50¢
 - *10 (Sun.) 2:30 & 4:30 PM Lecture, "Hawaii", by Nicol Smith
 - *11 (Mon.) 6:30 & 8:30 PM Denver Mus. Nat. Hist., Phipps Auditorium
 - 15 (Fri.) 8 PM Lecture, "Secrets of the Sea", by G. Clifford Carl
Nature on the Screen. Den. Mus. Nat. Hist., Phipps Aud.
Denver Museum Association. All seats free.
 - *17 (Sun.) 2:30 & 4:30 PM Lecture, "Around the World", by Dr. Everette Peterson
 - *18 (Mon.) 6:30 & 8:30 PM Den. Mus. Nat. Hist., Phipps Aud.
 - 24 (Sun.) 7 AM Field trip - Upper Cherry Creek - John Flavin, ldr. - PL5-1744
Speer Blvd. & Downing. Bring lunch. Transportation, 75¢
 - *24 (Sun.) 2:30 & 4:30 PM Lecture, "North - Far North with MacMillan"
 - *25 (Mon.) 6:30 & 8:30 PM by Donald B. MacMillan. Phipps Auditorium
 - 26 (Tues.) 7 PM Bird Identification Bird Room
8 PM Regular Meeting Denver Museum of Natural History
- NOTE---Please use north (employees') entrance.

* These lectures are furnished by the Denver Museum Association. All balcony seats and unclaimed downstairs seats are free to the public.